

Culture: Tanabata 七夕 Star Festival



Warmer days have finally come to Hokkaido! In this issue of Obihiro Pioneer, we will introduce one of Japan's season-based holidays: *Tanabata* Star Festival 七夕 たなばた.

The story behind *Tanabata* originates from China. It is the tale of two stars who are lovers: *Orihime*, a weaver and *Hikoboshi*, a cowherder. After marriage, the two began to slack on their duties and was punished by the emperor of the heavens (who happens to be *Otohime's* father) who sends them to opposite sides of the Milky Way Galaxy. The folktale says that once a year star-crossed lovers may meet on the 7th day of the 7th month (July 7th).

On July 7th in Japan, many towns celebrate the two stars coming together with festivals of food and fun. In the hot muggy summer, many enjoy *Tanabata* with somen noodles in a cool dipping

sauce. Somen noodles is a refreshing meal and some might say that the noodles represent *Orihime's*, the weaver, weaving threads.



The kanji for *Tanabata* literally means “night of 7,” but here in Hokkaido, *Tanabata* is actually celebrated in August! Up until the Meiji Period (late 1800's), Japan used the same calendar as ancient China: the lunar calendar. Currently, most of the world uses the current Gregorian calendar. If the two calendars were lined up, the “actual” date of *Tanabata* would be in early to mid August! While Japan has switched to the current calendar nearly 200 years ago, some regions choose to celebrate *Tanabata* in August, with one of the most famous being in Sendai. Look out for *Tanabata* and other summer festivals in July and August!

Image sources: https://www.flickr.com/photos/mira_photo/5912449448, <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7b/>

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Events at TIRC and in Tokachi and Obihiro

When	What	Where/Contact
7/1 (Sun) 10:30-15:00	Friends of the World 2018 Come and join one of the biggest international exchange events in Tokachi. Events: International food stands, stage performances, kids corner, special rally, NGO booths, and more.	Tokachi International Relations Center 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
7/11 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Volleyball Night Meet new friends from around the world while enjoying a fun and easy sport.	
7/14, 7/28 (Sat) 16:00-18:00	Japanese Conversation and Learning Table Improve your Japanese language skills in a friendly environment.	
7/21 (Sat) 10:00-11:30	48th Kids Playground (America) Come with your children to learn and play while meeting local families. This month you can enjoy American crafts, storytelling and much more! TIRC Multi-purpose Hall Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) For children 0-6 years old and their parents/guardians. Organized by the City of Obihiro	
7/21 (Sat) 18:30-20:00	68th International Talk (North India) (All about Curry) Learn more about the countries of the world. Our guest, an exchange student from India, will introduce his country and share more about India, Indian cuisine and the differences between Japanese and Indian curry. TIRC Winter Garden Fee: Free of charge (no registration required) For junior high school students and older. Organized by the City of Obihiro	
7/1 (Sun)	Kids' Festival 2018 こどもまつり2018 Enjoy a variety of activities just for kids.	Urahoru Town Health Park 浦幌町健康公園 015-576-2186
7/7 (Sat)	12th Shibare Rock Festival 第12回しばれロックフェスティバル Rock out in Japan's coldest town, Rikubetsu Town!	Rikubetsu Town Event Square 陸別町イベント広場
7/7 (Sat) 15:00-21:00	38th Shihorocchi Summer Festival and Firework Show 第38回しほろっち夏祭り, 花火大会 Enjoy a variety of events and activities for kids then watch the earliest firework show in Tokachi.	Shihoro Town Town Plaza 士幌町タウンプラザ周辺 しほろ夏祭り実行委員会

Events Continued

When	What	Where/Contact
7/7 (Sat) 12:00-20:30	GANKE FES 2018 Come to Shintoku's power spot "Ganke" to enjoy a festival of art, music, food, activities and even a market!	Guttari Lakeinn Hot Springs 湯宿くったり温泉レイクイン http://www.ganke-fes.com/#info
7/7 (Sat)	10th Rikubetsu Starlight Festival 第10回陸別スターライトフェスティバル Enjoy the night sky while enjoying a mini-concert, astronomical observation and a lecture by astronaut Naoko Yamazaki at the observatory.	Ginga no Mori Observatory 銀河の森天文台 0156-27-8100 https://www.rikubetsu.jp/tenmon/topics/1260/
7/14 (Sat)	39th Komaba Summer Festival Beer Garden 第39回こまば夏祭りビアガーデン Enjoy a beer garden with live performances, games, a raffle, and more.	Komaba Kaikan Parking Lot 駒場会館駐車場 音更町商工会 0155-42-2246
7/21 (Sat)	Wine Barrel Rolling Competition in Ikeda 2018 World Cup ワイン樽ころがし競争inいけだ~2018わーるトカップ杯~ Using wine barrels used when fermenting the wine, teams of 3 will roll barrels in 3 different timed events. The winning team will receive a special set of Tokachi Wines.	Ikeda Wine Castle ワイン城下特設会場 0155-72-3218
7/21-22 (Sat-Sun)	10th Furusato Ginga Line Rikubetsu Festival 第10回ふるさと銀河線りくべつ鉄道まつり Ride the Ginga line and try the raffle! There will be a stage show along with various festival booths. Have fun for free on the fuwa fuwa dome and firework show!	Michi no Eki Aurora Town 93 Rikubetsu 道の駅オーロラタウン93 りくべつ りくべつ鉄道 0156-27-2244
7/29 (Sun) 10:00-17:00	2018 All Japan Mama Chari 7-hour Race 2018全日本ママチャリ7時間耐久レース Mama Charis bicycles will run on a real circuit course. This year's race will run for 7 hours.	Tokachi Speedway 十勝スピードウェイ 0155-52-3910 http://tokachi.msf.ne.jp/
7/12-16 10:00-16:00	Food Valley Tokachi Food Bounty Festival 2018 フードバレーとかち食彩祭り2018 Try gourmet food made from Tokachi ingredients all in one place!	Kita Aikoku Koryu Event Square 北愛国交流広場 とかち食彩祭実行委員会 0155-65-4169
7/29 (Sun)	25th Shintoku Soba no Sato Festival 第25回新得そばの里まつり Enjoy buckwheat noodles or, soba, in the town made famous by it! This festival will be happening in time for visitors to enjoy fields of "soba" plants and their white flowers in full bloom.	Shintoku Soba no Sato Park 新得そばの里公園 (株)新得物産

Times and movies are subject to change! (for space reasons not all movies are listed)
To confirm, call or check online at: http://www.taiyogroup.jp/cinema/theater/_obihiro/movie.shtml



Title	Language	Dates
Deadpool 2	Eng Subtitles R15+	Until 12th
Darkest Hour (Winston Churchill)	Jpn Subtitles	Until 12th
The Post (Pentagon Papers)	Jpn Subtitles	Until 12th
Solo: A Star Wars Story	Dubbed and Subtitles	All Month
Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom	Dubbed and Subtitles	From 14th

Culture: 4th of July in the United States

American CIR Elaine will introduce one of her country's most patriotic days: the 4th of July!



America's Independence

Day, or often called "the 4th of July" celebrates the United States becoming independent from the United Kingdom (British Empire) in 1776. While schools are already in summer vacation, Independence day is a federal holiday that gives most public services the day off. It is a day to celebrate freedom and being an American. The day is usually filled with "all-American" local parades, baseball games, family barbeques and fireworks!

While everyone celebrates the holiday in their own way, let me share some a couple of notable events from across the country:

Hot Dog Eating Contest (New York)

Taking place at one of New York's most famous eateries, this event brings competitive eaters from all across the country and even from abroad! Competitors have 10 mins to eat as many hot dogs as they can. The contest has become famous in recent years because of the unexpected win by Japanese Takeru Kobayashi. The current record for the most hot dogs eaten is 72 hot dogs!

Mount Marathon Race (Alaska)

Every year on the 4th of July, trail runners from around the world gather in the little harbor town of Seward, Alaska for a run just about 3 miles long. Why? They compete for the glory of winning one of the most dangerous mountain races. Mount Marathon is extremely steep and is covered in slick, sharp rocks. It's common for runners to finish covered in blood and mud. Fortunately, there have never been any fatalities during the run!

Enjoy summer in your own way this 4th of July!

Image source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2c/Latacunga_independence_day_5.jpg

Obihiro Pioneer can be found at the following locations: Obihiro City Hall, Tokachi International Relations Center, Obihiro University International Center, Obihiro Tourism and Convention Center inside the Obihiro JR Station, Obihiro Public Library, Tokachi Plaza, Cinema Taiyo, Joy English Academy and online at www.city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp (click on "Information for Foreigners")

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